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BUSINESS MEETING ON COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RELATING TO ENERGY DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

MEETING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

Held in Washington, DC, Wednesday, April 28, 2010

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BUSINESS MEETING ON COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RELATING TO ENERGY DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28, 2010

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 11:08 a.m., in Room 1310, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Robert A. Brady [chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Brady, Lofgren, Capuano, Davis of California, Lungren, and Harper.

Staff Present: Tom Hicks, Senior Election Counsel; Matt Pinkus, Professional Staff/Parliamentarian; Kyle Anderson, Press Director; Joe Wallace, Legislative Clerk; Greg Abbott, Professional Staff; Darrell O'Connor, Professional Staff; Shervan Sebastian, Staff Assistant; Victor Arnold-Bik, Minority Staff Director; Karin Moore, Minority Legislative Counsel; Salley Collins, Minority Press Secretary; Katie Ryan, Minority Professional Staff; and Mary Sue Englund, Minority Professional Staff.

The CHAIRMAN. I would like to call the Committee on House Administration to order. I am hoping that this will be a nice, short meeting. Immediately following the conclusion of this meeting, we will begin the full committee oversight hearing.

Today we will consider a committee resolution to authorize energy demonstration projects in the House of Representatives.

And I now call up Committee Resolution 8, which is before the Members. And, without objection, the committee resolution is considered as read and open for amendment.

[The information follows:]

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
COMMITTEE RESOLUTION # 111-8
Adopted: April 28, 2010

Energy Demonstration Project Authorization

Resolved, That the Committee on House Administration authorizes the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to conduct an Energy Demonstration Project (Demonstration Project) with funds provided for that purpose in P.L. 111-68 in conformance with the requirements in section 2 through section 5. The Energy Demonstration Project shall consist of a series of initiatives to explore methods of reducing energy consumption and promoting energy efficiency and cost savings in the House of Representatives.

Section 2. The CAO shall submit to the Committee on House Administration prior to any direct expenditure of appropriated funds to carry out any initiative under the Demonstration Project a complete description of and justification for the initiative.

Section 3. The CAO shall comply with the *Guidelines For Procurement Of Goods And Services For The U.S. House Of Representatives* with respect to all procurements in conjunction with the Demonstration Project.

Section 4. The CAO shall submit a report to the Committee on House Administration by the 5th day of each month detailing the progress and costs of each initiative conducted as part of the Demonstration Project during the preceding month from the date of initiation to the date of completion of the initiative.

Section 5. The CAO shall submit to the Committee on House Administration forthwith upon completion of each initiative conducted as part of the Demonstration Project a third-party, independent expert evaluation detailing the expert's findings with respect to the initiative's utility, efficiency, economy, scalability, safety, and all other relevant factors, and any recommendations regarding possible future deployment in the House of Representatives.

Section 6. The Chairman is authorized to make technical and conforming amendments to this resolution.

The CHAIRMAN. Committee Resolution 8 authorizes the Chief Administrative Officer, CAO, to conduct a series of demonstration projects that explore ways to reduce energy consumption, leading to better energy efficiency and cost savings.

Funds for the project were already approved through Public Law 11–68, the Fiscal Year 2010 Legislative Branch Appropriations Act. This act was adopted in a bipartisan fashion at both the subcommittee level and on the floor.

Our committee, through adoption of the resolution, will exercise its authority under the rules of the House to initiate disbursements of the funds. Under the committee resolution, the CAO will have four requirements that must be met.

First, the CAO will be required to submit project plans along with justification for the proposal to the Committee on House Administration before any appropriated funds may be spent.

Second, the CAO must act in accordance for all procurements for proposed demonstration projects with the guidelines for procurement of goods and services for the U.S. House of Representatives.

Third, the CAO must submit a detailed report to the committee outlining the progress and cost of each part of the demonstration project starting on the preceding month of the start date until project completion.

And, finally, the CAO will be required to submit, upon completion of each project, an independent, third-party, expert evaluation detailing, among other things, the project's utility, efficiency, and economics.

I urge approval of the committee resolution.

And, if there is any additional debate, the 5-minute rule will be applied.

Ranking Member Lungren.

Mr. LUNGREN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And I appreciate you calling this business meeting. In adhering to our normal legislative procedures, I do think it is important that we deliberate over and vote on issues such as these.

Mr. Chairman, a number of my colleagues and I do have concerns, however, about this resolution. You know, yesterday, this committee took the unusual step of going to the floor of the House and introducing and passing a resolution which froze Members' salaries—in other words, it did not allow Members to receive the cost-of-living adjustment.

And there was recognition during the debate that, while that does not have a significant impact on the budget relative to all the other expenditures, it was important for us to do that because it's symbolic and it also shows that we are aware of the very difficult economic situations that are affecting our constituents.

And so, while in some other circumstances we may think a couple of million dollars is not that big a deal, it is a big deal these days. And I just have some concern about this program.

It is my understanding that the Architect of the Capitol is responsible for dealing with the energy needs of the House, as well as the Senate. As I understand, the Architect of the Capitol is the one charged with ensuring that there is consistent, reliable energy for the House.

And more than just providing this energy, the Architect of the Capitol is the one who has already been working within this House to improve energy efficiency. They have provided energy to these historic buildings over a century, all the while doing so with less energy, lower costs, and improved services over that period of time.

And I just wonder why it makes sense for us to establish this within the province of the CAO. We have had some difficulty in terms of the program of carbon offsets. The waste composting program has been over-budget. I just don't see where this is a justification for putting another several millions of dollars to pay for demonstration projects.

And so I understand—I can count the people who are here; I can see the way the vote is going to go. But I did want to at least register my concern and the concern of Members on our side of aisle about this. And I appreciate the chairman giving me the time.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Ms. Lofgren.

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Chairman, I will be brief. And I would like to speak in favor of the resolution.

This really follows on the 2007 initiation of the Greening of the Capitol program, which was assigned to the CAO. And the CAO established under that program a goal of reducing the House's energy consumption by 50 percent over 10 years, which obviously would be a huge cost-saver for the House.

I just want to reflect back on some of our prior efforts on this. Congressman Zach Wamp and I introduced a bill to authorize the CAO to carry out a series of demonstration projects to promote the use of cutting-edge technologies. And the purpose of the bill was to find innovative ways to reduce energy consumption, promote energy efficiency, and to save costs, ultimately, for the House.

Mr. Wamp and I reintroduced the bill this year, and the bill was marked up and reported out of the House Administration in June of last year. This authorization really follows along on that effort. The Leg Branch Appropriations has stepped forward to act. And, pursuant to their actions, the CAO did issue a request for proposals. I think 36 proposals were submitted. There was an outside group that evaluated them; it wasn't the CAO himself who did.

And so now we want to assert our jurisdiction. And I think that is fair enough to do. I have talked to Mr. Wamp, who I think is somewhat frustrated at our pace of innovation, to be honest. But I think he does understand the need for the House Administration Committee, as well as Leg Branch, to play their appropriate role in this.

And so, I really think—I understand and I certainly respect Mr. Lungren. We work together on many items. But I do think that this is a smart thing to do. And, you know, we can have differences of opinion, but I hope that the resolution will be adopted.

And I yield back and thank the gentleman.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the lady.

Any more debate?

Are there any amendments?

If not, the question is an agreement to the committee resolution.

All those in favor, signify by saying, "Aye."

Any opposed?

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. So ordered, that the ayes have it.

Thank you. And we now will adjourn this meeting and go into our oversight hearing.

[Whereupon, at 11:16 a.m., the committee proceeded to other business.]